

III. REMARKS

By this amendment, claims 1 and 4 have been amended. As a result, claims 1-9 remain pending in this application. Applicants are not conceding in this application that those claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Office, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Office. Applicants do not acquiesce in the correctness of the rejections and reserves the right to present specific arguments regarding any rejected claims not specifically addressed. Further, Applicants reserve the right to pursue the full scope of the subject matter of the original claims in a subsequent patent application that claims priority to the instant application. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-3 and 5-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Okada (U.S. Patent No. 6,910,018), hereafter “Okada.” Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Okada in view of Inoue (U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2002/0059122), hereafter “Inoue.”

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

With regard to the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection over Okada, Applicants assert that Okada does not teach each and every feature of the claimed invention. For example, with respect to claim 1, Applicants continue to submit that Okada fails to teach logging an approver into an application used to make item requests and performing the approval functions on the same application. In contrast, the login window in the passages of Okada cited by the Office is described as being in its purchase request system (i.e., the system that it uses to procure

authorizations) and not in an application that is used to actually request the items. Rather, Okada does not teach that its authorization system is the same system that is used to make item requests. On the contrary, Okada, teaches that the procurement is provided by “...another system [from the authorization] used to actually order the articles to external suppliers.” Col. 5, lines 2-7. To this extent, the authorization of Okada is not done in the same system as the procurement, but rather is done in a separate system.

In contrast, the claimed invention includes “...logging an approver into an application used to make item requests [and] displaying by the application...” Claim 1. As such, the logging / displaying of the claimed invention is not performed by separate applications as are the functions of Okada, but rather are performed by the application used to make the item requests. Thus, the separate systems of Okada do not teach or suggest the unified application of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Office withdraw its rejection.

With further respect to independent claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that Okada also fails to teach or suggest that the receiving is adapted to receive a plurality of approval determinations from the approver simultaneously. The Office admits that Okada does not expressly teach this feature of the claimed invention, but rather states that it would be obvious to try. However, the Office does not even provide another reference that performs simultaneous approval, instead using impermissible hindsight to construct its unsubstantiated factual statement. The claimed invention, in contrast, includes an expressly claimed ability to receive a plurality of approval determinations from the approver simultaneously. Accordingly, Applicants

request that the rejection be withdrawn or that references that support the Examiner's position be provided.

With still further respect to independent claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that Okada also fails to teach displaying a view containing a set of item requests to the approver containing all item requests for which approval is requested from the approver, the set of item requests including a plurality of item requests from a plurality of requesters. The Examiner again admits that Okada does not expressly teach this feature of the claimed invention, but rather states that it would be obvious to try. However, the Office again does not even provide another reference that performs simultaneous listing of multiple item requests from multiple requesters, instead using impermissible hindsight to construct its unsubstantiated factual statement. The claimed invention, in contrast, includes an expressly claimed ability to display a view containing a set of item requests to the approver containing all item requests for which approval is requested from the approver, the set of item requests including a plurality of item requests from a plurality of requesters. Accordingly, Applicants again request that the rejection be withdrawn or that references that support the Examiner's position be provided.

With respect to dependent claim 4, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references also fail to teach or suggest automatically determining the approver and a subsequent approver based on an item in the item request and automatically forwarding the approval message to the subsequent approver in the approver list after the updating step. In contrast, while Inoue discusses an approval path, it does not teach or suggest that this approval path is used for automatic forwarding of messages from to a subsequent approver. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

With respect to the Office's other arguments regarding dependent claims, Applicants herein incorporate the arguments presented above with respect to the independent claims from which the claims depend. Furthermore, Applicants submit that all dependant claims are allowable based on their own distinct features. Since the cited art does not teach each and every feature of the claimed invention, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

IV. CONCLUSION

In addition to the above arguments, Applicants submit that each of the pending claims is patentable for one or more additional unique features. To this extent, Applicants do not acquiesce to the Office's interpretation of the claimed subject matter or the references used in rejecting the claimed subject matter. Additionally, Applicants do not acquiesce to the Office's combinations and modifications of the various references or the motives cited for such combinations and modifications. These features and the appropriateness of the Office's combinations and modifications have not been separately addressed herein for brevity. However, Applicants reserve the right to present such arguments in a later response should one be necessary.

In light of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner require anything further to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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